

# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

## DESCRIPTION

The Chesterfield Emergency Communications Center is the 911 answering point for all public safety departments in the county. The center receives and processes incoming calls for service, then promptly dispatches the appropriate Police, Fire, and/or EMS resources to handle the situation. In addition, the center handles radio dispatch for the Sheriff's Office and Animal Control. The personnel who staff the center are the "lifeline" in the county's public safety system. For calls with a medical emergency, appropriate resources are immediately dispatched and the caller is then given pre-arrival medical instructions utilizing a nationally recognized system of Emergency Medical Dispatch.

The county acknowledges and advertises to the public the availability of an enhanced 911 emergency telephone system for reporting emergencies. In doing so, it has become an expectation by the public that the county answers all emergency calls and responds to problems 24 hours per day, seven days per week. In addition to the emergency calls, the center receives and answers many telephone calls that are for non-emergency information or public service. The center also provides referrals, gives directions, and answers questions about county procedures and practices, thereby helping to promote seamless customer service to citizens of Chesterfield County.

## FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	<b>FY2002</b>	<b>FY2003</b>	<b>FY2004</b>		<b>Change</b>			
	<b>FY2002</b>	<b>FY2003</b>	<b>Biennial</b>	<b>FY2004</b>	<b>FY2003 to</b>	<b>FY2005</b>	<b>FY2006</b>	<b>FY2007</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>FY2004</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	\$3,629,869	\$3,944,400	\$3,944,400	\$4,004,300	1.5%	\$4,004,300	\$4,004,300	\$4,004,300
<b>Operating</b>	883,879	1,330,500	1,530,500	1,382,400	3.9%	1,382,400	1,382,400	1,382,400
<b>Capital</b>	<u>19,933</u>	<u>26,100</u>	<u>36,100</u>	<u>21,000</u>	-19.5%	<u>21,000</u>	<u>21,000</u>	<u>21,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$4,533,681	\$5,301,000	\$5,511,000	\$5,407,700	2.0%	\$5,407,700	\$5,407,700	\$5,407,700
<b>Revenue</b>	<u>4,102,415</u>	<u>4,141,600</u>	<u>4,309,600</u>	<u>4,224,500</u>	2.0%	<u>4,224,500</u>	<u>4,224,500</u>	<u>4,224,500</u>
<b>Net Cost</b>	\$431,266	\$1,159,400	\$1,201,400	\$1,183,200	2.1%	\$1,183,200	\$1,183,200	\$1,183,200
<b>FT Pos.</b>	82	82	82	82	0	82	82	82

## BUDGET ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

In FY2004 the Emergency Communications Center will continue a 911 program in the schools. This program is offered in conjunction with the Police Department and teaches approximately 4,000 young people when and how to use 911 services. The center hopes to expand efforts to include educating the public on the kinds of situations that constitute an emergency and what warrants calling 911.

Personnel are available to receive and dispatch calls for service 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Calls for service increased by 7% in calendar year 2002 to 160,941. With the increase in the number of calls, the department was able to maintain low process times,

or the amount of time it takes to receive and then dispatch a call. A major impact on these process times is the increasing number of callers who do not speak English. As a result, the county has contracted with a service that provides translation for multiple languages on demand.

In addition to recently absorbing radio dispatch for the Sheriff's office, the center began processing and dispatching calls for Animal Control services in June 2002. Coupled with this, the department has also experienced a 19.9% increase since FY2000 in wireless 911 calls that originate from callers reaching wireless communication towers in Chesterfield County. As

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use of cellular phones becomes more prevalent, it is anticipated that wireless 911 calls to the center will continue to increase at a rate of 4,000 calls annually, caused in part by multiple persons reporting the same incident.

Additional funding has been requested for six handheld radios and for six emergency communications officer positions. One of these positions was requested to replace the position converted to a full-time training facilitator. Two officers are requested to replace the two positions reclassified as managers of operations and operations

support. The remaining three officers are being requested to accommodate the additional workload experienced as a result of the center's dispatch of calls for the Sheriff's Office and Animal Control. At this time, funding has not been identified for these positions.

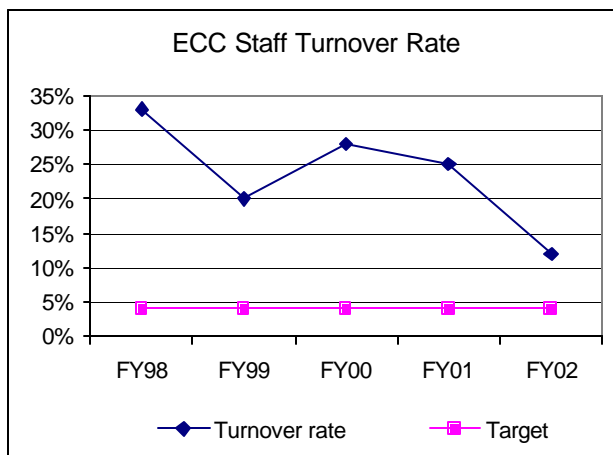
The FY2004 budget does include \$21,000 to purchase fifty telephone/radio headsets and two personal computers.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

**Goal:** To recruit, develop and support qualified and diverse individuals. Supports countywide strategic goal number 6

**Objective:** Increase staffing levels in order to meet performance objectives

**Measure:** Rate of turnover of fully trained personnel in the Emergency Communications Center

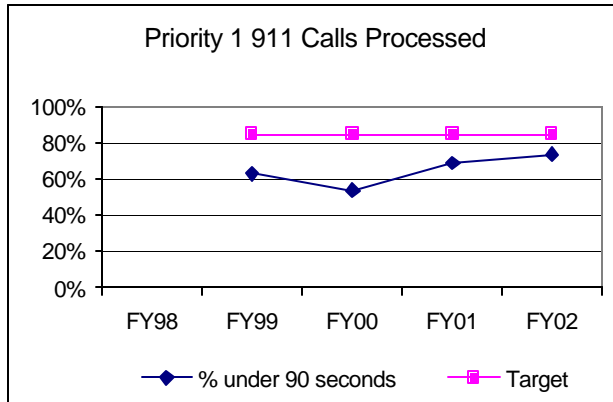


### Initiatives

- Improvement of supervisory skills
- Employee cross-training
- Staff development courses
- Positive feedback and reinforcement
- Rewards and recognition
- Continuous recruitment
- Improvements to new-hire training process

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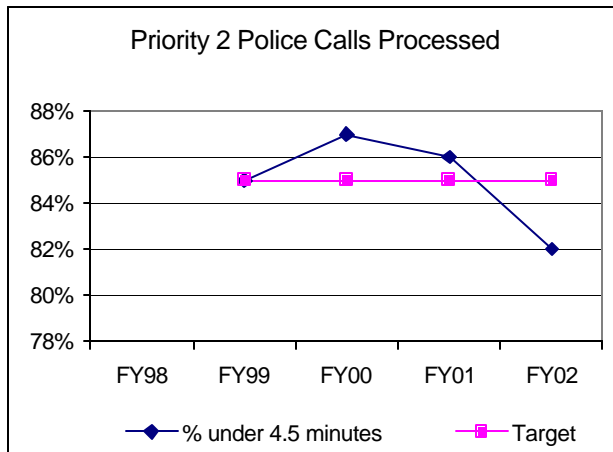
- Goal:** To provide timely entry and dispatch of calls for service for the county's Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Departments. Supports countywide strategic goal number 4
- Objective:** To increase potentially life-saving services to the citizens
- Measure:** Percentage of time in which priority-one calls are received and dispatched in 90 seconds or less (These are primarily Fire and EMS calls for service)



## Initiatives

- Continuous improvements of each Emergency Communications Officer's skills in call taking and dispatching.
- Conduct quality assurance audits for both accuracy and timeliness by the quality assurance coordinator. This includes periodic reviews of calls with individual staff.
- Computer aided dispatch system (CADS) funded in the county capital improvement program (CIP)

- Goal:** To provide timely entry and dispatch of calls for service for the county's Police, Fire, and EMS Departments. Supports countywide strategic goal number 4
- Objective:** To efficiently take and dispatch Police priority-two calls for service for the protection of our customers
- Measure:** Percentage of time in which Police priority-two calls are received and dispatched in 4.5 minutes or less



## Initiatives

- Continuous improvements of each Emergency Communications Officer's skills in taking and dispatching calls.
- Conduct quality assurance audits for both accuracy and timeliness by the quality assurance coordinator. This includes periodic reviews of calls with individual staff.
- Computer aided dispatch system (CADS) funded in the county capital improvement program (CIP)

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## **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

The wireless telephone industry is expected to introduce changes to their network that will provide location information on wireless 911 calls in FY2003. This will allow the center to expand customer service to more wireless callers.

In addition, the FY2004-FY2010 Capital Improvement Program includes a project to purchase a new Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS), a Mobile Computing Solution, and an Automatic Vehicle Location System for the Police, Fire, and EMS departments. The new CADS system will replace the Emergency Communications Center's 20+ year-old text system with a Windows-based system. This system will allow the Emergency Communications Center, Police, Fire, and EMS units to communicate via digital radio frequency modems without voice interaction, creating a faster, more efficient dispatching process. The planned automated vehicle location system will allow the center's personnel to more effectively allocate resources to emergency incidents. This project will impact the center's

budget in several ways. Additional costs will be incurred for the necessary systems technology support, software upgrades, and staff training in the use of the new technology. For purposes of this document, future year costs associated with this project have been reflected in the Police Department's budget.

Technological advancements, increased Department of Criminal Justice Services accreditation mandates, and the need to keep pace with continuous change and quality customer service will continue to necessitate an examination of the ECC training process. To further this goal, the Emergency Communications Center will begin the process of seeking accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. This process is expected to take about two years and will help ensure that the department and its staff continue to provide critical services to county citizens in the most efficient and cost-effective way.